

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAGR, IR

SUBJ: IRAN'S GRAIN IMPORT NEEDS

1. DR. ALIZADEH, DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMERCE, WILL BE MEETING WITH A NUMBER OF LARGE GRAIN EXPORTING FIRMS TO DISCUSS A FIVE-YEAR GRAIN IMPORTING CONTRACT. THESE MEETINGS WILL TAKE PLACE OVER THE NEXT TWO OR THREE WEEKS AND TALKS WILL COVER WHEAT, FEEDGRAINS, RICE AND VEGETABLE OIL.

2. AS BACKGROUND INFORMATION LEADING UP TO THIS EVENT, THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE WAS CREATED IN MARCH 1974, AND ONE OF ITS MAJOR FUNCTIONS IS TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE STOCKS OF FOOD ARE ON HAND AT ALL TIMES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE IRANIAN CONSUMER. TO CONFORM TO THIS MANDATE MANY BUYING AND IMPORTING FUNCTIONS OF VARIOUS MINISTRIES WERE SHIFTED TO THE NEW MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. THE FTC, FOREIGN TRADE COMPANY, WAS MOVED FROM THE FORMER MINISTRY OF ECONOMY TO MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, AND THE WHEAT BUYING AND IMPORTING FUNCTION, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS SHIFTED FROM BANK OMRAN (COOPERATIVE BANK) TO THE NEW MINISTRY. INITIALLY THE MINISTRY CONCERNED ITSELF WITH BASIS FOODSTUFFS, I.E., WHEAT, RICE, VEGETABLE OIL, AND SUGAR. NOW THEY ARE BUYERS AND IMPORTERS OF CHEESE, BANANAS, ORANGES, APPLES, AND SOON ARE HOPEFUL OF TAKING OVER THE BUYING OF FEED GRAINS, AND BASIC

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PROCESSED FOODS. TO DATE, BUYING AND IMPORTING MEAT,

LIVE SLAUGHTER ANIMALS, MILK POWDER AND EGGS RESTS
WITH THE MET ORGANIZATION, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE.

3. THIS DESIRE TO ASSURE IRAN OF ITS LONG TERM GRAIN
REQUIREMENTS CURRENTLY
STEMS IN PART FROM THE USG
ACTION ON OCTOBER 5, 1974, WHEREIN THE US GRAIN FIRMS
VOLUNTARILY REPORTED EXPORTS OF A NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL
COMMODITIES TO THE USDA. MOREOVER, IRAN HAS ONLY
700,000 METRIC TONS OF SILO CAPACITY OPERATED BY
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND AN ESTIMATE 1.1 MILLION METRIC
TON SILO CAPACITY IN PRIVATE HANDS. THIS CAPACITY
REPRESENTS ABOUT FOUR MONTHS SUPPLY OF WHEAT AND FEED
GRAINS. LINKED CLOSELY TO THIS LIMITED STORAGE
CAPACITY IS THE CONCERN OF THE LONG SHIPPING DISTANCE
FROM GRAIN SUPPLYING COUNTRIES AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A
PROLONGED DOCK STRIKE. THE MINISTRY INITIATED RECENTLY A
CRASH PROGRAM TO BUILD AN ADDITIONAL 1.3 MILLION M.T. OF
SILO STORAGE.

4. AS BEST DETERMINED THE STARTING POINT FOR THE
CROP YEAR 1975-76 IS 2 MILLION M.T. SHEAT, ABOUT 1.2
MILLION M.T. FEED GRAINS, AND ALTHOUGH NOT CONFIRMED
ABOUT 300,000 M.T. LONG GRAIN RICE. UNABLE DETERMINE
VEGETABLE OIL IMPORT NEEDS.

5. EVEN WITH GOOD WEATHER CONDITIONS IRAN WILL NOT
BE ABLE TO PRODUCE WHEAT, FEED GRAINS, RICE AND
VEGETABLE OIL TO MEET DOMESTIC NEEDS FOR AT LEAST
FIVE YEARS. SURGING CONSUMPTION BROUGHT ABOUT BY
INCREASING AFFLUENCY AND POPULATION GROWTH IS EXPECTED
TO KEEP WELL IN ADVANCE OF PRODUCTION INCREASES.
HENCE, IRAN WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN EVER-GROWING
IMPORTER OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS.
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